

Letter No. 59

11 July 41.

Major. J. H. Massey.
6 Palestinian Coy. The Buffs.
Middle East Force.

My darling sweet Barbara -

Have you noticed how often I have used this beginning to my letters? When I think about it now, it seems that I have used it very often, & I do hope that you like it as much as I do. I love using your name - it is very pretty, & because of you it has a lovely, warm, & very satisfying sound to me. And I love to call you mine - I think of you so much as my darling - & the word sweet is overwhelmingly applicable to you - & to the way in which you treat & look after & love me.

I am thinking more & more of how & when I shall be home again. The news is so encouraging & interesting the last few days. Russia seems to be doing marvellously well, & even more interesting news may be coming from that quarter. Our air raids on Germany are mounting heavily & we are promised much more to come - & by God, it serves them bloody well right. America is moving into Iceland - a highly significant & promising event. The Syrian business is, it seems, about to end. And this, together with Russia's new role, will guide Turkey's future actions, I should imagine. And the voice & actions of the British Empire become more & more unified, solid, & determined. Whereas Germany, presuming her failure in Russia, the answer to this should be settled by the time you get this letter - is having to fight a more & more difficult war. Her own people must be getting pretty discouraged - the only allies she has are the people she has conquered & created, or frightened into submission - & the bloody wops. Wishful

thinking & hackneyed expression - it may be, but there
are very solid grounds for hope & speculation as to how
soon it may now be over. I really do feel that it is
rapidly becoming a question of how long can Germany
stick it - & what we are going to do, & the U.S.A. too -
to give her more to put up with. The very fact of
Russia being in the war will have the excellent effect
of making us intensify our efforts, & from now on, it
should be a steady & increasing process of piling it on.
But it is perhaps rather pointless to write about all these
things, which in any case are always in the papers &
on the wireless - & which will be much effected by the
time it will take for this letter to reach you. But
I think about the whole business so constantly, in the
light of my return to you, & so it seems natural to
talk about them. And then when it does all end, I
have to extricate myself from the Middle East. I
wander so much about how soon after, it will begin, &
what the system & order will be. At least we shall
be able to use the Mediterranean, & perhaps we shall
use the French railways too. I think daily, of myself
getting off a train at Victoria, & running wildly along
the platform, with Peter on a piece of rope - &
the ecstasy of suddenly seeing you again. I don't know
how we are going to stop talking, to make love - or
how we are going to stop making love to tell
each other about every thing. I rather feel we shall
have to do both at the same time. It will
be marvellous & heaven. I suppose we shall
spend a few days with your ma - & then we shall
go up & have to see my family - single beds again -
& then I shall be seeing Peter, he will say how

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much holiday we can have - thank goodness when we don't call it leave any more - & when I must start work. And then will come the terrific problem of finding a place & a house in which to live. I expect we shall do something of a temporary nature - & look for perfection at our leisure. There is no limit at all to one's thoughts & ideas about this.

Sunday 13 July. You asked me in one of your recently arrived letters, to tell you about the country - the towns & the trees & so on. Well, it seems I have told you quite a lot from time to time in my letters, & when I go away anywhere, I try to tell you as much as possible of what I have seen. I do wish I could go away more & see more - but it is always so difficult to get away, & there is the trouble too of who to go with. If only poor Frank had come up here with me, we could have done & seen so much together, & enjoyed ourselves too. Ben Hagi is a good little man & v. interesting too - but it is a little difficult going off with somebody who calls you "Sir" all the time - it is a shade awkward with the other Jewish sets too, who look a bit askance, & I think Ben is my favourite! It's a bit schoolboyish, isn't it?

Jerusalem I have hardly seen at all, as each of the three times I was there, I was in a rush. Once, I arrived in darkness & left again at 8.0 in the morning - the other times, I just drove straight to H.O. & then away again. The impression I got was of a large modern city, with first class roads & pavements & shops & hotels & cinemas & so on. All these modern

buildings are built of ^{H.} an almost white stone, which is very largely used in Palestine, & it looks very clean & handsome & effective, & of course, remains white. But of course, in Jerusalem, there is obviously any amount of interesting things to be seen, & by one means or another I must get there & see them before I leave. I'm only afraid that when the war ends, I shall have too much time for sight-seeing. Tel Aviv is a completely modern city, much bigger than Jerusalem, & slightly industrial. But, though it is very well planned & laid out, & very clean & new, it seems to have such masses of concrete & to be rather jerry built, unlike Jerusalem & Haifa. Tel Aviv is 100% Jewish - the Arab population living in Taffa, the two towns run into one another. I must look at Taffa properly the next time I am there with Ben-Arye - up to now, there never seems to have been time.

Altogether, my connections with the Arabs have so far not been very great. For which, on the whole, I am truly grateful. Had I had an Arab Coy I don't really know how I should have gone on, they are such a handful. Deserting & going absent is common practice, & they are the devil to train - & of course, the language difficulty is chronic, as very few of them speak English, & 90% are illiterate in their own language. So it is no use publishing Coy Orders, as I do in English & Hebrew, because they just could not read them, & every martial instruction has to be given to them verbally.

I had my very first Arab lunch last week, & very good it was too, & an entirely new experience, which I

enjoyed immensely. This was with Moscovitz, a friend of
 his - a very interesting man named Zaleroff, who has
 been Dr. Weizmann's private secretary, & is now doing
 some other job in the Jewish Agency. He had been in
 England when war started - then went to America
 & was there for 1 year & saw how American opinion
 & sentiment changed & changed in our favour - then
 came back to Palestine by air, by way of New
 Zealand, Australia, Singapore, & India. I enjoyed
 listening to him so much. We sat over lunch until 3-30.
 The place we had lunch was in an Arab restaurant,
 so the surroundings were reasonably civilised.
 The proceedings began with a glass of "arag" (I do not
 know how to spell it) which is clear as water but
 blows your head off. You put water into it, & it
 then turns cloudy, like Guinness - & it tastes like
 Ood or some other drink. Then comes the food,
 which consists of various parts of the sheep, all very
 nicely roasted or fried - special little sausages -
 liver - brains - kidneys - & various other strange parts, &
 all very tasty. Also some excellent salads, & one
 very fragrant tasting salad mixed in with cream.
 And some special bread. All these are on
 separate dishes on the table, & the system is to
 dip the meat into the creamy salad - & take
 off a piece of bread & scoop up the or that -
 all quite regardless of any body else dipping in too.

And if any particular dish is going well, they presume for like that & want to make a meal of it, & bring a large dish more. It was all marvellously tasty, & the free & easy way of poking your way into this & that all helps you to enjoy the meal. We then had gorgeous water melon - which is not the same as the melon we have at home. It is bigger, & dark pink inside & has many, many seeds running all through it - is slightly crisp in texture. Then lovely Arabic coffee. I believe it was all very cheap - I shall go there again.

But now I have been promised a real Arab dinner, which will be interesting & exciting. Where a sheep will be killed, & we shall all squat round, & I shall be the guest of honour, there will be any amount of ritual, & we all have to dig in & eat with our hands, & we all stuff ourselves to bursting point, & belch at the end. If you have read the Seven Pillars of Wisdom, you will know what is coming. I am hoping this will be arranged next week - then I shall have a long story for you.

I must go to bed now. I was v. late beginning this. And last night I went to see "Barney Mail", not too bad. I am enclosing some scraps of Arabic from last week end & have written who is who on the books. A few cables came today - by numbers - but it told me what I wanted to know - that you & Max are well. It was in reply to mine of June 25th - so they have been quite slow. I presume Newton Ferrer is near Moss Mayo & that you have arrived safely - I do hope so. All my dearest love to you, my darling - you are my own darling Harry. Sweetheart & love you so. And a big kiss for Max. (X) xxxxx.



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Mrs. H. Massey.

Carseland.

Pillay Hill.

Noss Mayo.

No. Plymouth.

